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SAFEGUARDING YOUR FOOD AND DRUG SUPPLY -- NO. 5.

P A R Y

A radio talk by W. W. Vincent, chief, western district, Food and Drug Administration, delivered Thursday, July 3, 1930, through Stations KGO, San Francisco, KECA, Los Angeles and KHQ, Spokane, at 8:45 A.M. Pacific Standard Time.

J. S. Department of Agriculture

Good morning, Label Readers! I know you are reading labels because you are writing to me about them. You are getting inquisitive. Today I want to speak of those labels that you should read most carefully. I have promised to talk of patent medicines. My experiences in connection with some of them are interesting.

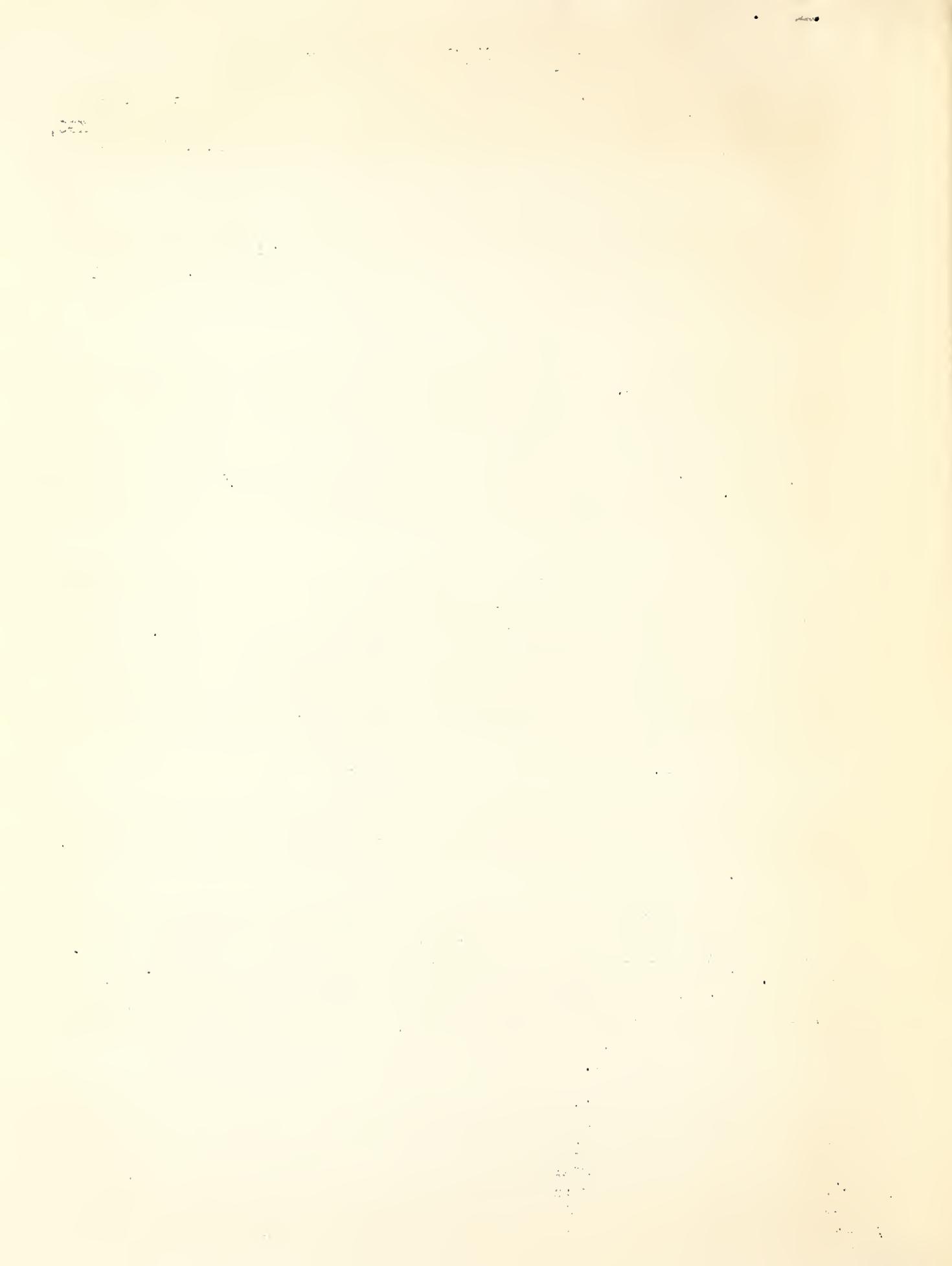
I remember a very important case tried in the State of Washington not so many years ago. A very influential man operated a side-line, a patent medicine business. For his activities he formed a corporation. He had four preparations all intended for the treatment of serious diseases. Upon analysis the four preparations were found to be practically the same, consisting essentially of a mixture of cane sugar, starch and charcoal in varying amounts. Traces of arsenic were found in two of the preparations. Four names were employed. The preparations were for man as well as animals. He was exploiting a broad field.

The first of his preparations was represented as an effective remedy for rheumatism, for kidney, liver, bladder, stomach and catarrhal troubles, for mental and physical debility, neuritis, eczema, blood diseases, women's ailments and the most acute and chronic rheumatic afflictions. Under another name one of his sugar, starch and charcoal preparations was presented as effective for venereal diseases. Under still another label the same ingredients passed as an effective remedy for tuberculosis in cattle, for the prevention of tuberculosis of animals in general. The fourth preparation was represented effective as a remedy for cholera in hogs, as a preventative of cholera in hogs, and also good for cholera and diarrhoea in man.

When this manufacturer shipped his preparations in interstate commerce it was but natural that your food and drug agents sampled and examined them. Analysis showed nothing of potency, only sugar, starch and charcoal in varying amounts.

A prosecution quickly followed. This prominent individual proved to be the only stockholder. He had a reputation to maintain in his community. He could not plead guilty to fraudulently exploiting his fellow-man. He went to trial. The jury quickly found him guilty, sustaining the Government's charge that all therapeutic and curative statements on the labels of these four preparations were false and fraudulent. He appealed the case by the Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the conviction of the lower court and he paid his fine accordingly, and discontinued the medicine business.

What, my friends, is your opinion of the man who would sell you preparations such as I have described, consisting of but sugar, starch and charcoal? Don't say these medicines could do no harm. Remember that while taking them the people or the animals were suffering from lack of proper treatment. Any intelligent person, should he think a moment, would of course realize that under no circumstances would there be a substance or combination of substances that would be of value in the treatment of all or even half of the diseases this manufacturer enumerated.



Unfortunately, fraud in connection with the sale of medicines is not completely ended when the labels are brought into full compliance with the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act. There is that broad field of general advertising open to the manufacturer. The use of newspapers, periodicals and radio for questionable advertising can not be prevented by the Food and Drugs Act. The National Better Business Bureau in cooperation with many ethical newspapers and magazines and broadcasters is discouraging fraudulent advertising and the Federal Trade Commission is now proceeding against this abuse of public confidence.

The case I have related is but one of hundreds in which examinations in Government laboratories have shown alleged medicinal preparations to contain ingredients worthless in the treatment of the diseases indicated upon the labels. Remember, folks, when you buy a medicine, the manufacturer has probably stated upon the label all that can reasonably be claimed for it. You may as well forget extravagant promises for it that you otherwise hear and read.

Before buying proprietary medicines hereafter, think a moment. The search is still on for a universal panacea that will remedy all our ills; in fact today there is unknown to medical science any mixture of drugs or medicines which in itself is a competent treatment or cure for such common diseases and diseased conditions as influenza, tuberculosis, pneumonia, high blood pressure, tumors, cancer, pyorrhea, diabetes, Bright's disease, lost vigor, asthma, catarrh, boils, and those diseases peculiar to certain organs, such as kidney, disease, liver, stomach, or heart ailments. Think of it, there is yet no adequate drug treatment for poultry suffering with typhoid, cholera, coccidiosis, fowl pest, roup, diphtheria, chicken pox, diarrhea and gapes, and the blackhead of turkeys. Some of these latter can be prevented by proper precautionary methods but once contracted do not respond to drug treatments.

Our ideas of medicine vary in a large measure with our early training. Today from China are imported numerous interesting products all believed by the Chinese to be of therapeutic value. Among these are to be found dried beetles and centipedes, snakes in wine, deer horns in alcohol, tiger bones, and lastly. Ginseng Root. The latter product is interesting and finds a place in most of their medicines. These roots frequently bear a more or less crude resemblance to the human form; the more nearly man-like its structure, the greater the value of the particular root -- so believe the Chinese.

The Chinese apparently have used everything in their pharmaceutical work and out of all, in my opinion, has come but one important contribution in the last fifteen years, the drug Ephedrin, a remarkable one, similar in action to Adrenalin or Epinephrine.

My friends, I have seen sold, quite recently, to the American public a product represented as a remedy for constipation, biliousness, diarrhea, dysentery, sore throat, fevers, diphtheria, typhoid fever, scarlet fever, pneumonia, grippe, catarrh and hay fever. It consisted of about .7 of 1% sulphuric acid, .02 of 1% of sulphurous acid, traces of nitric acid, hydrochloric acid and inorganic iron, and 99% water. If you needed treatment for any of the diseases I enumerated the chances are you wouldn't have needed it long had you taken that medicine. Sold as a microbe killer it ate the microbes along with the lining of your stomach. Due to numerous seizures of this



medicine by the Government its manufacture has been discontinued.

The day is past when anybody can sell you a morphine preparation labeled as soothing syrup for babies. The Federal Food and Drugs Act requires that habit-forming drugs or their derivatives such as morphine, cocaine, opium, cannabis indica, chloroform and acetanilid be stated on the label. Alcohol likewise must be declared.

The standards of purity for drug products are those published in the U. S. Pharmacopoeia and the National Formulary. If the products vary from these standards a label declaration indicating extent of variance must be employed.

Within recent years it was found the manufacturing and packing processes commercially employed for ether and chloroform were not satisfactory. The Government caused numerous seizures to be made. As a result manufacturers have greatly improved their methods of manufacturing, packing and storing.

In certain heart ailments where powerful stimulants are needed nitroglycerin is administered, usually in tablet form. This product as formerly made was often deficient in nitroglycerin - a result of faulty manufacturing methods. When analyses in Government laboratories showed that nitroglycerin tablets were substandard the manufacturers were prosecuted. As a result nitroglycerin tablets on the market today quite generally comply with stated standards.

Remember, folks, I am not disparaging the use of all medicine, because there are many agents which, properly applied, will afford much relief from pain and discomfort. I am only citing instances, typical of what you could expect were there no enforcement of the Food and Drugs Act. I am urging you to read the labels on the preparations themselves and not that material which may reach you through sundry and various channels other than the labeling on or within the package.

While speaking of drug products - Have you noticed the exploitation of numerous antiseptic preparations? Your Federal Food and Drug officials have. During the past three years they have made chemical and bacteriological examinations of more than 1000 supposed antiseptic preparations. Think of it, less than 100 bore labels to which no exception was taken. Two of the so-called antiseptic preparations actually contained live bacteria. Many of the others were found upon testing not to kill or prevent germ growth. Many of the effective antiseptics carried unwarranted curative claims upon the labels.

The manufacturers of antiseptic preparations are a prolific lot and constant vigilance is kept over the labels of each new crop of antiseptics. As a user of such preparations you should not expect miraculous effects from the use of any antiseptic, such as a mouth wash, the chief result of which is a pleasant taste. Such a preparation remaining in contact with the tissues but a brief period does not destroy all germ life in the mouth, nor does it have any influence during the remaining hours of the day.

Remember, folks, all you can have reason to believe appears upon the label of the package. You must discriminate between that and the advertising in circulars, posters, periodicals, bill-boards and the like. And you must think carefully about the claims even on the label, for, I am sorry to say, there are still some falsely labeled drug preparations on the market. Some

of these may be distributed locally and in that case do not come under the jurisdiction of Federal authorities. Other preparations may be under investigation by Federal officials at the time you are reading the label. The information I have given you should help you decide the truth of a label or of advertising matter pertaining to drug preparations.

If you desire to know more about these products- more about "How to Read Food and Drug Labels" - more about becoming a discriminating buyer, write to W. W. Vincent, U. S. Food and Drug Laboratory, San Francisco, California. Ask for a new booklet we have just issued, "Fake Antiseptics and the Law," also our "Read the Label" information.

Next week if you will listen in at this time I will tell you something of tea; that all tea comes from the same plant. I will tell you what the different kinds of tea are in order that you can purchase more intelligently. I expect to tell you a tale of spice adulteration, adulterated cloves; of a single seizure by the Government of 56 tons, two solid carloads, and their being shipped around the world in order to carry out the deception. Meanwhile "Read the Label."

